

BLOOMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL.

GRADUATION ESSAYS.

A Recent Protest.

Those who have read history have doubtless noticed a curious phenomenon, how prone human nature is to be secretive and to invest itself and the things with which it deals in a sort of mystery or intricacy. The tendency is not confined to any one people but is noticeable in all countries of the world. In the case of a sovereign it is a sort of fabled divinity holding him about; in the case of caste or nobility it is presumed rights from birth or other circumstance. Here in our own country where all are supposed to be on a certain degree of equality, as simple men, a like influence is observed. No one can tell how this tendency originated or perhaps precisely explain its mystic power, but it is a hidden something that seems to be gradually felt more and more as the world grows older. In social life it sets us apart, in groups or cliques, each of which has its peculiar marks and manners. In public and business life we have been taught that its control is so absolute, that it renders us scarcely more than a passive tool or a piece of machinery.

The moment a person takes up a calling or a profession he quite ceases to have more than a slight knowledge of what lies beyond his pale or how it may be connected with his own. Even the sciences which claim to seek only simplicity show a like tendency in the systems of terminology which fence them about, understood only by professionals, so that to every outsider all seems mystery and bewilderment instead of distinctness and simplicity. Some of us here have recently had occasion to know of a protest against this tendency. Within a few years there seems to have been a sudden awakening to the thought that music was a possible factor of great value in education; that it was the one art within the reach of every individual. So far as nature indicates, it is claimed that song can be on the lips as well as on the hearts of every one. Viewed from the side of nature it is one of the apparently simplest products of the human voice, produced by what seems to be an equally simple mechanism, the vocal organs. Music so produced nature undoubtedly intended should be the perfection of simplicity and within the reach of all.

And so it is—a mere child almost unknowingly can catch the simple lullabies of its mother and with comparative ease reproduce the melody of them. As it grows older, by a most natural progress almost of itself it comes to appreciate the laws of simple harmony in its attempts. So far nature of itself carries the child.

Let us now see what man has done to assist it. He has of course a science of music to offer, and just here the difficulty begins. Music and simple musical sounds long ago began to be invested with arbitrary terms and an equally arbitrary system of notation. This at first seems to have been comparatively simple, but gradually became more and more complex. More and more of artificial barriers were built about it and thereby all were excluded who were not already familiar with the art, and knowledge of it became of necessity for the privileged few who could fathom its mysteries. As time went on these difficulties in no way diminished. Other signs and terms were added, parts were increased, new complexities of key, line bar, space, dot, rest, and manifold other details of the staff system were introduced, till music as now written became more perplexing than a foreign tongue would be. The philosophy of all this possibly may be that music as we know it has been devised for the hand or rather for instruments which are controlled by the hand, instead of the voice. But the hand in structure and appliance is one of the most complex and intricate of all things. Accordingly upon the attempts to build the science of music upon this instead of upon the simple thing, the human voice, all the difficulties of music as written depend. Musicians have long felt and acknowledged this false position of music. Its intricacies have been such as to require years of labor without apparently mastering its difficulties, and on account of this the failures to make general and successful use of the system have been many. So, natural attempts to reform and remove the difficulties have been many.

Of one of these protests some of us have recently had occasion to know something. A system has been lately originated, accredited by some eminent musicians, that proposes to teach the art of reading music without the use of any of the present mystic symbols or artifices. The system is based on the simple ideas of time and tone. It makes a single beat the standard of time and admits but one representation of the staff instead of fourteen. Its aim is that the child shall think and read music just as it sings it—naturally. Although we cannot say it has enabled the child to do this, yet it has not been without some results, for it has simplified the first steps, which perhaps are the most important to the beginner.

But it has not yet become perfected and has done little to simplify the written language of music. The Tonic Sol Fa system affords thus far no sufficient clue as to how its simple notation may be substituted for the present staff system. Still it holds out the hope that music as a written language may be simplified. Other systems have been attempted but none ever cleared away the mysteries of the art. It may be that we are on the eve of a creative period and that this uncertainty is but the dawning of a natural school, which in some way will unravel the obscurities of this, the most pleasing and delicate of all fine arts, and so simplify the intricacies which are so tightly woven around it. All are beginning to feel the need of some simple system. Natural ability in music is not wanting in children, but as matters now stand it is inactive because of inability to read readily the notes of the staff as they are at present written.

What greater boon could be conceived than that some skillful person would devise a scheme whereby the written language of music could be so simplified as to be within the reach of every one?

MABEL M. MORRIS.

Township Committee.

The regular meeting of the Township Committee was held on Wednesday evening, July 6th. Present, Mr. Thos. Oakes, Chairman, Mr. R. N. Dodd, Mr. F. S. Benson and Mr. Walter Freeman. Mr. Palmer, and Mr. Oakes of the Bicycle Club, appeared before the Committee on behalf of the members of the Club.

Referring to the notice recently issued relating to bicycle riding on the sidewalk, he said that the Club had no desire to antagonize the Committee in any respect, still they felt as if they ought not to be kept entirely off the sidewalk, especially in places where it was almost impossible to ride on the road. If complaints are made the Club is desirous of using its influence in a manner to please the citizens, and think this preferable to making arrests, and equally efficacious.

A communication was read referring to the stoppage of the drain running under Orange street, in front of property owned by Mrs. Andrews. The matter was referred to Sidewalk Committee.

An appropriation of \$20 was made to defray expense of firing salute on Fourth of July.

The following petitions were received from Excelsior Hose Company: That the name of W. Farnoff be stricken from their membership roll, adding the names of Joe Bickler and C. A. Brady. The above were granted. That a flag sidewalk be laid in front of their new building on Broad street. Referred to Sidewalk Committee. That a gas lamp be placed over the door of the new building and that chairs and table be furnished for use of members. Referred to Fire Committee.

A petition sent in by property owners on Peloubet street, asking that the said street be accepted by the town as a public highway. Referred to Street Committee.

Tax Collector Marr was instructed to prepare a list of unpaid taxes of 1885.

The following orders were issued: Road Committee for repair of Roads \$200, for Public grounds \$100; C. E. McDowell for road construction \$800; Township Assessor \$50.

The following bills were presented for payment: John Smith police services \$14; James Foster \$14; George Cadmus \$14; Robt. Williams \$10; H. L. Van Gieson to Poor account \$27; J. P. Scherff \$2.15; Overseer of Poor, town of Landis, Cumberland County, for support of Jane Bonnell \$20; Chas. M. Lockwood for work at Truck House \$2.

The following sidewalk petitions were received and referred to Committee: For sidewalk on Ridgewood avenue front of property of A. R. Degro; Ridgewood avenue front of property of W. F. Taliaferro; East, west and north sides of Wildwood Terrace, property of E. S. Wilde, Ridgewood avenue; Midland avenue front of property of Robert Peel; Ridgewood avenue near Washington street front of property of Robert Beach; Broad street, near Canal street, front of property of John Collins; East side of Franklin street front of property of Chas. M. Davis; Midland avenue between Washington street and Lincoln avenue front of property of Geo. W. Hancock; Broad street front of property of Wm. Frank.

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THOS. C. DODD, Treasurer.

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AMZI DODD, - - President.

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SURPLUS (N. Y. Standard) - 5,525,129.31

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